Chile's Junta Invades the Schools

By Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

It has been our lot to chronicle the tragedy of Chile.

In 1972, we published secret documents, which proved the CIA and International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. had plotted together to block the late Salvador Allende from coming to power.

But Chile had such strong democratic traditions that Allende, although a Marxist, couldn't be stopped from assuming the presidency, because he had more votes than any other candidate.

Thereafter, the CIA and ITT sought to undermine the Allende regime, we reported, by sabotaging the Chilean economy. We quoted from secret U.S. embassy cables of a "sharpening economic crisis."

Still, the embassy advised Washington, "Chileans have great ability to rush to the brink, embrace each other and back off. With Russian and East European help, some debt relief. . .and some breaks, Chile just might be able to rock along for some time to come."

Chile's democratic traditions, we reported, should keep the army at bay. Again we quoted the embassy's secret cables: "Prospects of military intervention for foreseeable future are extremely small."

The embassy was wrong. The generals moved against Allende, left him dead in the presidential palace and imposed a military dictatorship upon Chile.

This most democratic of South American nations suddenly was transformed into a harsh police state. Evidence was smuggled to us of widespread political arrests and torturing.

Now we have received even more depressing documents smuggled out of Chile by our sources, as before, at great risk to themselves and their families.

These documents show that the military junta has taken over the nation's schools, has forced upon them a curriculum of "national security" studies, has assigned soldiers to monitor the classrooms and has organized a secret spy system to check upon the loyalty of students, teachers and administrators.

Our own National Education Association, which has been keeping track of teacher oppression in Chile, reports that hundreds of professional educators have been dismissed and jailed. Some of them, according to reliable reports, have been cruelly tortured.

We have obtained copies of a "denunciation" form, which the junta has distributed to students and teachers for use in reporting on the attitudes and behavior of their peers.

The form asks for a "history" of the individual, including information that would help at "the interrogatory." Persons filling out the form are asked to "evaluate" their colleagues on a scale of 1 to 10 for "fanaticism," "audacity," "dangerousness," and "possibilities of re-education."

The smuggled documents also include a memo from the education minister to the defense minister, discussing "the teaching of national security courses in educational institutions."

The memo instructs the defense minister to appoint "advisers to the schools" and to name "the officers who will be appointed to teach the classes."

At the university level, according to the memo, students will receive 96 hours of "theoretical" and "practical" instruction. The theoretical program covers such subjects as "internal threats," "subversion," "political deviations" and "political and ideological aggression."

The practical program consists of "attendance in a national defense department installation or unit for a minimum period of three months."

Not only students but their parents are summoned to attend meetings. "Failure to attend," warns one notice, "will be more than sufficient reason to proceed with your immediate arrest."